

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AID-20 EB-11 PM-07 NSC-07 SPC-03 SS-20

RSC-01 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /098 R

DRAFTED BY AF/E:WBCOOTE -

APPROVED BY AF/E:WBCOOTE

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R 192244Z MAR 74

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 054971

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, ET

SUBJECT: BULCHA DEMEKSA'S VIEWS OF ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL
SITUATION

1. AF/E DIRECTOR COOTE HAS BEEN IN REGULAR TOUCH WITH BULCHA DEMEKSA, MINAG-DESIGNATE IN NEW ETHIOPIAN CABINET SINCE BEGINNING OF RECENT CRISIS. FROM TIME HE FIRST LEARNED OF MINISTERIAL APPOINTMENT HE HAS DEMONSTRATED RELUCTANCE TO RETURN TO ADDIS TO TAKE UP NEW DUTIES. HE INITIALLY FELT, AND CONTINUES TO FEEL, THAT HE CAN CONTRIBUTE MORE TO ETHIOPIA BY REMAINING AT HIS PRESENT POSITION IN IBRD THAN BY JOINING NEW CABINET. (AT SAME TIME HE POINTS OUT THAT HIS CHILDREN ARE IN U.S. SCHOOL WHICH IS COSTLY AND HE NEEDS PRESENT SALARY IN ORDER FINANCE THEIR EDUCATION.)

2. BULCHA REVEALED THAT HE TRIED TO GET NEW PM TO AGREE TO HIS STAYING ON AT IBRD UNTIL END OF TERM IN NOVEMBER. PM, HOWEVER, HAS AGREED TO HIS REMAINING ONLY UNTIL END OF MARCH. BULCHA, THEREFORE, IS PLANNING TO COMBINE VISIT TO ADDIS WITH IBRD BUSINESS TRIP THIS MONTH TO BURUNDI, BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND. HE LEAVES WASHINGTON AT END OF THIS WEEK. WHILE IN ADDIS, HE WILL RENEW HIS EFFORTS TO OBTAIN PM'S APPROVAL TO REMAIN AT IBRD

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UNTIL END OF TERM, STRESSING IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION HE CAN

MAKE TO IEG AT PRESENT POST. HE WILL OFFER TO MAKE HIMSELF

AVAILABLE TO SERVE ON VARIOUS IEG DELEGATIONS SEEKING
IBRD ASSISTANCE AND SIMILAR-TYPE TDY ASSIGNMENTS.

3.

BASIC REASON FOR BULCHA'S RELUCTANCE TO ACCEPT MINAG
APPOINTMENT IS HIS FEELING THAT PRESENT GOVT WILL BE SHORT
-LIVED. HE THINKS THAT ENDALKATCHEW MAKONNEN IS POOR
CHOICE FOR PM IN VIEW HIS CONSERVATIVE, ARISTOCRATIC
BACKGROUND, AS EVIDENCED BY OPPOSITION TO ENDALKATCHEW
SHOWN TO DATE. BULCHA BELIEVES MIKAEL IMRU WOULD HAVE
BEEN BETTER CHOICE. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THERE IS REALLY
NO OFFICIAL WHO IS FULLY QUALIFIED TO TAKE ON ROLE OF PM,
SINCE HIM, UNFORTUNATELY, HAS NEVER GROOMED ANYONE FOR
NATIONAL LEADERSHIP.

4. MOREOVER, BULCHA NOT CONFIDENT ANY CABINET CAN COPE
WITH "CHAOTIC" ECONOMIC SITUATION WHICH LIES AHEAD.
ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF SOME OF DECISIONS ALREADY TAKEN
ARE FAR-REACHING AND VERY EXPLOSIVE. HE ASSERTED THAT
IEG DOES NOT HAVE SUFFICIENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO MEET
INCREASED PAY RAISES PROMISED TO MILITARY AND VARIOUS
CIVILIAN ELEMENTS. NO ONE, THEREFORE, IS WILLING TO TAKE
ON RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTER OF FINANCE. NUMBER OF
INDIVIDUALS HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BUT HAVE REJECTED POSI-
TION. BULCHA EXPRESSED OPINION THAT THERE WOULD BE AD-
VANTAGE IN PUTTING A MILITARY MAN IN THAT POSITION, SINCE
ONLY A MILITARY MAN COULD EXPLAIN TO HIS FELLOW MILITARY
THAT FUNDS WERE LIMITED AND COULD BE STRETCHED ONLY SO
FAR IN MEETING THE MULTIPLE DEMANDS BEING MADE OF IEG.
HOPEFULLY A MILITARY MINFIN, HE ADDED, COULD BRING A
LITTLE REALITY TO THE MILITARY.

5. BULCHA BLAMES ONE ACTION TAKEN BY IEG SIX MONTHS AGO
FOR SETTING RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN MOTION. CABINET
COMMITTEE, UNDER EX-MINFIN MAMMO TADESSA, PROPOSED
SALARY INCREASE FOR MINISTERS. PROPOSAL WAS ACCEPTED BY
COUNCIL OF MINISTERS AND PUT IN EFFECT. PEOPLE THEN HAD
LEGITIMATE COMPLAINT THAT MINISTERS INCREASED THEIR OWN
SALARIES TO MEET HIGHER COSTS BUT IGNORED EVERYONE ELSE.
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6. ABOVE IS FOR EMBASSY'S INFORMATION ONLY.

7. AMBASSADOR KIFLE TOLD AF/E DIRECTOR TODAY THAT HE NOW
PLANS TO LEAVE WASHINGTON FOR ADDIS EITHER THIS EVENING
OR TOMORROW. HE SEEMS TO BE FULLY RECOVERED FROM HIS
RECENT ILLNESS. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CABINET, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, MINISTERS (DIPLOMATS), PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS, VISITS, POLITICAL LEADERS, ECONOMIC RESOURCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974STATE054971
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740058-0583
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740331/aaaabdem.tel
Line Count: 114
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 28 AUG 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <28 AUG 2002 by WorrelSW>; APPROVED <06 JAN 2003 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: BULCHA DEMEKSA'S VIEWS OF ETHIOPIAN INTERNAL SITUATION
TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, ET, (DEMEKSA, BULCHA)
To: ADDIS ABABA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005